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MEASURES TO ELIMINATE INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fourth year

Letter dated 9 July 1999 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to our note verbale dated 11 June 1999 and to the many other plea letters addressed to you in the past on the subject of the Lebanese detained in Israeli-manned detention camps and prisons.

On the occasion of the Lebanese Detainee Day, which will be commemorated on 14 July 1999, Lebanon, yet once more, calls on the international community to intensify its efforts towards the release and towards the ending of the aberrant ordeal of those Lebanese held in Israeli-controlled detention camps and prisons. This persisting Israeli practice constitutes a flagrant breach of the basic norms of international and humanitarian laws and blatantly violates the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949.

On the subject of this tragic reality, I transmit to you herewith a copy of a plea letter, addressed to you and to the international community by the Follow-up Committee for the support of Lebanese detainees in Israeli-controlled detention camps and prisons, and have the honour to request that this letter be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 40 and 155, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hicham HAMDAN
Deputy Permanent Representative
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

Annex

[Original: Arabic]

Appeal to the international community on the occasion of Lebanese Detainee Day, 14 July, issued by the Follow-up Committee for the Support of Lebanese Detainees in Israeli Prisons

The Lebanese people and those throughout the world who uphold human rights annually dedicate 14 July to Lebanese held in Israeli prisons. We urge the international community and every Government to save the lives of the Lebanese hostages arbitrarily detained in Khiam and other Israeli prisons.

Israel holds 170 Lebanese hostage in its prisons: 128 in Khiam and 42 in prisons inside Israel such as Aqlan, Ayalan and Nafha. It is also holding 10 Palestinian residents of Lebanon.

Some of those in Khiam have been held there for 14 years. They include Ali Ghazi al-Saghir and Sulaiman Ramadan, who lost a leg in the detention camp as a result of deliberate medical negligence. He is currently facing further amputation, Israel having refused to release him with 10 other detainees exchanged on 26 June 1998.

Riyadh Kalakash, detained since 1986 along with his brother Adil Kalakash, is suffering from a chronic nervous breakdown. When his father visited him at the detention centre on 25 May 1999 he was unable to see his son because his health had deteriorated so severely.

Mustafa Arabiya, detained since 1991, has had several heart attacks and is subject to fainting fits. He has shrapnel in his shoulder. Samir Qasim, detained since April 1989, has lost one eye. Health conditions have deteriorated for many of those detained, including Ghandi Ayyoub, Karam Mustafa, Husayn Aqil and Mustafa Tubah.

Israel throws into its prisons elderly people such as Muhammad Salim Qatibay, 64, Ali Ghanawy, 60 and Abdah Malikani, 70, the only woman detainee. Many of the detainees, such as Ali Mustafa Tubah, Husayn Aqil and Ahmad Sadiq, were under 18 when first detained, and have grown up in prison.

Khiam prison is closed and isolated. Human rights and other humanitarian organizations are not permitted any contact with detainees. Israel, which is occupying Southern Lebanon, manages and administers the prison, and is responsible for everything that takes place there, notwithstanding its denial of responsibility and claim that its client militias control the prison. The detainees held in prisons inside Israel are being held as administrative hostages. The sentences of those held in Ayalon prison were completed 11 years ago. Nevertheless, Israel extends their terms every six months. Such prisoners include Ahmad Ammar and Bilal Dakrub. Some are held without trial and others were subjected to judicial proceedings that did not meet even the minimum international standards. Samir al-Qantar, detained since 22 April 1979,

received four life sentences; Ali Balhas received a life sentence and Anwar Yasin was sentenced to 30 years imprisonment.

Some detainees, such as Shaikh Abd al-Karim Abid and Mustafa al-Dayrani, have not been tried since they were abducted, and languish in prisons to which the International Committee of the Red Cross is denied entry. They are not allowed to correspond with their families. The trials are a sham, and there is no difference between those who have been tried, those whose sentences have been completed and those held without trial. They are all hostages. The majority of detainees suffer appalling health and psychological conditions: their families are forbidden to visit them, and they are completely isolated from the world. On 12 November 1997 the Israeli Supreme Court announced publicly that the Lebanese prisoners were hostages and a bargaining card.

Israeli legislation permitting the taking and torturing of hostages is a flagrant violation of international law and is entirely unprecedented. Never before in history has a judicial authority sanctioned the taking of hostages.

Lebanese detainees held in Khiam and Israeli prisons are being held as hostages, in contravention of every international convention and agreement. They are being detained without reference to any law and are denied the most basic rights provided for by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

The Follow-up Committee for the Support of Lebanese Detainees in Israeli Prisons considers Khiam detention centre to be an international disgrace, and urges the international community to work to achieve the following:

1. The immediate release of all ill, young and elderly prisoners.

2. The release from Ayalon prison of all those who have completed their sentences.

3. The halting of all torture and of the cruel and degrading treatment of detainees.

4. The appointment of an international committee to investigate Khiam prison; the bringing to justice of Israeli officers who have tortured prisoners, and the payment of compensation to and rehabilitation of victims.

5. The contact of all prisoners with their families, lawyers and the International Committee of the Red Cross and other humanitarian organizations.

6. The condemnation of the ruling by the Israeli Supreme Court that recognized Lebanese detainees as hostages and the recision of that ruling as being in flagrant violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

7. The invalidation of the sham trials of the prisoners and the acknowledgement that such trials are unjust and in contravention of international law.

On the occasion of Lebanese Detainee Day, we call upon the conscience of the international community, all Governments and organizations, all human rights organizations and all those who defend the right of the human being to life and freedom of opinion to let out a great cry: close Khiam prison and free all the hostages held in Israeli prisons.